

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 8, 2004

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

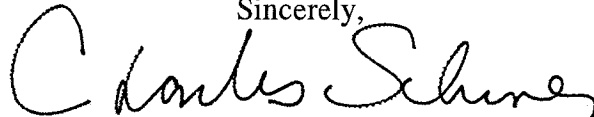
I am writing you to urge you to support increasing Amtrak's FY05 funding from your proposed \$900 million to \$1.8 billion. David Gunn, President of Amtrak has stated that Amtrak needs \$1.8 billion to continue current operations. Without adequate funding, Gunn has said he will shut Amtrak down. Amtrak is vitally important in New York, and therefore I am concerned that you would suggest a proposed funding level that will force Amtrak to shut down all of its services affecting millions of New Yorkers, and millions of Americans throughout the country.

In your FY 2005 budget, you state that if Amtrak is restructured along the lines of your Administration's Amtrak restructuring proposal, you will support higher levels of funding for Amtrak. Your proposal would shift most of the burden of providing Amtrak service from the Federal Government to the states. Due to the severe fiscal situation most states including New York are in, this would effectively end much of the current Amtrak service provided today. I urge you to consider a bipartisan Amtrak restructuring proposal such as S. 1961, a bipartisan Amtrak reform proposal introduced by Senator Hollings.

The United States leads the world in so many aspects of technology, innovation and infrastructure, it is a tragedy that we are so far behind in intercity rail development and implementation. I hope that you will see that your Amtrak proposal will only insure that we as a country will continue to remain far behind the rest of the world in intercity rail.

I urge you to support Amtrak's FY05 budget request and reevaluate your long term Amtrak reform proposal.

Sincerely,



Senator Charles Schumer
United States Senator